

# **ANNUAL REPORT** 2016 – 2017





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PHOTOCREDITS

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Kirsty Morris: p3 third image. Jennifer Cameron: p3 fifth image. Malcolm Storey: p16 left image.

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Dave Fenwick: Inside front cover, p3 second, fourth and sixth image, p4, p7, p9, p16 right image, p18, p20 left and middle image, p26 left image, p29, p30 left and right image, p32, p36, p47.



# INTRODUCTION

The National Biodiversity Network is a membership organisation built on principles of collaboration and sharing. Our vision is that:

<sup>66</sup> Biological data collected and shared openly by the Network are central to the UK's learning and understanding of its biodiversity and are critical to all decision-making about nature and the environment.<sup>99</sup>

To achieve that vision the Network is working to deliver improvements to the recording, collection, verification, curation, aggregation, analysis and use of biological data in the UK.

The Network's priority is to grow the national commitment to sharing biological data and information. Through this we will provide a comprehensive, unparalleled and authoritative understanding of our natural world and will use that knowledge effectively to educate and inform.

This review of 2016 – 2017 highlights the work that has taken place over the last year to support the NBN Strategy 2015 – 2020. It is fair to say that the major work for the year focused on the lead up to the launch of the NBN Atlas, our new data sharing infrastructure. Whilst linked most directly with Strategic Aim 4, the NBN Atlas work cuts across all of the NBN's Strategic Aims and has required us all to adapt our ways of working and to take new opportunities arising from the changes it brought. We are committed to the NBN Atlas delivering a long term, sustainable and successful platform to suit all our needs.

Phrases or terms "National Biodiversity Network", "NBN Trust" and "NBN" all refer to the people and organisations that are members of the NBN Trust or share data via the Network. The Network employs a team to facilitate and coordinate its growth and development and that is referred to as the "NBN Secretariat".

This Annual Report is produced by the NBN Secretariat.

# STRATEGIC AIM 01

Record, collect, diversify, enhance and mobilise biological data: We will grow our capacity and capability to record and collect high quality biological data.

## STRATEGIC AIM 02

Make biological data and information available to everyone: We will continue to collaborate to embed our collective data and knowledge creation at the heart of biodiversity learning and environmental decision-making.

## **STRATEGIC AIM 03**

**Captivate and engage people about wildlife**: We will promote the natural world, the enjoyment and importance of observing nature and biological recording and the utility and power of our shared data.

# **STRATEGIC AIM 04**

Provide the best biological information management infrastructure: We will ensure stability, security and usability for an increasingly mature data management infrastructure.

# **STRATEGIC AIM 05**

Support the development of the NBN, its Board and its members: We will support and grow our Network as an indispensable partnership for nature and in the successful implementation of this Strategy.

# **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**



When I think about the history of the NBN, I think it is fair to say that 2016 - 2017 has seen us achieve far more than perhaps any of us thought possible in a 12 month period and this predominantly relates to the introduction of the NBN Atlas.

When we started to talk about a replacement for the NBN Gateway as little as three years ago, the reality of such a huge change to our data sharing infrastructure, not only for the NBN Secretariat, but also for all of our NBN data partners was, in many respects, a step into unknown waters. The NBN Gateway had, after all, been our major data sharing tool since its launch back in 2004. Even though we all recognised that the NBN Gateway was no longer able to serve our needs without huge financial investment in its technological capabilities and data storing capacity, to move away from a tried and tested infrastructure to a completely new one was going to be a huge step for us all.

The first iteration of the NBN Atlas was the Atlas of Living Scotland, which launched at the end of May 2016. This site enabled us to demonstrate the power of the infrastructure we were moving to, whilst allowing us to test, gather feedback and make refinements to it. The Atlas of Living Scotland, renamed as the NBN Atlas Scotland, has essentially been the launch pad for the NBN Atlas and subsequent Atlases, such as the NBN Atlas Wales. We are therefore very grateful to Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scotland's Environment for their support and early commitment to the new system.

I have to say that the amount of work carried out across the entire year by the technical team at Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the web development team at RedPaint, as well as the NBN Secretariat, to ensure that we launched on time, on 1st April 2017, was quite incredible. I would also like to thank the supporting work of the team at Joint Nature Conservation Committee to help us through the transition from the NBN Gateway to the NBN Atlas which was hugely valued. I have no doubt that the NBN Atlas will go from strength to strength over the course of the coming financial year, with input from all our users to steer its future development. I will look forward to reporting on progress in next year's report.

As I have mentioned the hard work of the NBN Secretariat during the year, I would particularly like to thank Jo Judge, our Chief Executive, who has provided strong leadership and support for the team. Jo's determination to make the NBN Atlas, and all the associated work succeed, cannot have failed to impress her colleagues. Indeed, it would be easy to forget that she is only one year into her role at the NBN, such has been the amount achieved. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of her great team in the NBN Secretariat who are always cheerful and ultra-efficient.

Across the Network I would like to thank our data partners and all those who provide their records to be freely and openly shared, the NBN and the NBN Atlas wouldn't exist without you. I would also like to thank the ongoing support we have for the annual NBN Conference. Around 180 delegates joined us at National Museums Scotland last November and we hope to break the 200 mark this coming year.

Finally, I would like to thank our members for continuing to support us and new members for supporting us afresh. We undertook a review of the membership scheme in 2016 to create a fairer and more beneficial system for those who wish to join us. I am pleased to note that we are already beginning to see numbers rise.

As a charity, we rely on our members, donations and sponsorship to allow us to continue our work. I believe that the creation of the NBN Atlas will allow even more organisations and individuals to see what the NBN Partnership can achieve, which I hope, in turn, will encourage more people to join the NBN and help support our aims.

**Professor Michael Hassell** 

Michael Havel

<sup>66</sup>Across the Network I would like to thank our data partners and all those who provide their records to be freely and openly shared, the NBN and the NBN Atlas wouldn't exist without you.

# **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**



It seems like only a short while ago I was writing a piece for last year's Annual Report. This, my first, year has been incredibly busy for myself and my team. I really enjoyed getting out and about around the UK to meet many of our partners and members and learning

more about what makes our Network tick. The main focus of the NBN Trust during 2016/17 was concentrated on development of the NBN Atlas.

It was the end of an era with the decommissioning of the NBN Gateway on the 31st March 2017. The NBN Gateway has been an excellent tool enabling data sharing on a scale never seen before in the UK. I would like to thank all of our colleagues in JNCC who developed and managed the site on behalf of the NBN Trust for the last 13 years.

As the NBN Gateway was being decommissioned, we had a very tight timescale for developing the first phase of the NBN Atlas. The NBN Secretariat (along with our honorary team member, Dave Martin of CSIRO) pulled out all the stops to have phase 1 of the NBN Atlas, and the NBN Atlas Wales, live and available for the 1st April, to join the NBN Atlas Scotland which was launched earlier in the year. I am very proud of the fact that we had a functioning biological information management infrastructure up and running, within budget, on time and with a massive 215 million species records available to all.

I would like to thank everybody in the Network for all of the feedback that we have received to date on the NBN Atlas. We really appreciate the time you take to test and report back to us on how things are working for you. This really is just the first phase of the NBN Atlas and we will be holding stakeholder workshops towards the end of the year to get your input on where we should go next with the NBN Atlas. I very much hope you will continue to engage with us as the NBN Atlas develops, as the possibilities for where it could go for the benefit of the Network are immense.

I have been constantly amazed at the quality and quantity of work produced by our very small team. The team shrunk even further as Rachel Stroud moved onto new adventures in February. However, I am pleased to say that the NBN Secretariat will be growing over the next year, as we will welcome two new members of staff to a burgeoning Technical Team. This will not only enable us to drive the development of the NBN Atlas, it will also provide more technical support for our members who may not have those skills in house.

There have been a number of changes within the NBN this year, for example switching from the NBN Gateway to the NBN Atlas, adopting Creative Commons licences and moving towards more open data sharing via the NBN. There will almost certainly be more changes to come, both within the NBN and externally.

As I look forward to the year ahead, I foresee exciting opportunities and some challenges, sometimes within the same situation. There are many uncertainties surrounding Brexit and what that may mean for the environment. Along with the ever more present decreases in available funding. Furthermore, the direction of travel towards the expectation of more open data poses some challenges, but I believe there are also opportunities associated with open data for our network.

We need now, more than ever, to work together to meet these challenges and exploit the opportunities, in order to continue to provide a biological recording sector that is the envy of the rest of the world.

Dr Jo Judge





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All figures relate to the end of the period 1st April 2016 unless stated otherwise.

30,000+	Number of biological rec
176	Number of Network men
184	Number of data partners
133 million	Number of records share at 31st March 2017
487	Number of datasets uplo
7.3 million	Number of biological rec
954 million	Number of biological rec during the year
34,769	Number of records on th
396	Number of registered us
215 million	Number of records on th
6.9 FTE	Number of staff employe

31st March 2017

cords made daily in the UK

mbers

s supplying data to the NBN Gateway

ed by Network members on the NBN Gateway

oaded to the NBN Gateway

cords loaded onto the NBN Gateway in the year

cords downloaded from the NBN Gateway

ne Consultants Portal at 31st March 2017

sers of the Consultants Portal at 31st March 2017

ne NBN Atlas at 1st April 2017

ed in the Secretariat of the NBN Trust



# **A WORD FROM OUR NBN MEMBERS**

As mentioned in our main introduction to this report, the National Biodiversity Network is a membership organisation. Our members are diverse with their own aims and objectives, but they are playing their part in the Network and are supporting the NBN Strategy and Vision. The Network is strengthened by the ability of its partners to work together and, as a charity, the NBN can only continue its work as a result of membership. Here we bring you reports from a cross section of our members who give their thoughts, in their own words, on what NBN membership means to them.

# What the NBN means to me

### Written by John Davy-Bowker

As a keen individual member and supporter of the National Biodiversity Network it's been great to have the opportunity in this year's annual report to describe what the NBN means to me. As a freshwater biologist with a long standing interest in stemming the decline in biodiversity in freshwaters, the datasets upon which the NBN is built are vital. Without the central collation of long term species distribution data that is so effectively delivered by the NBN it would be extremely difficult to measure changes in rarity of freshwater species or to identify former sites from which a given species has been lost. This information is central to understanding changes in freshwater biodiversity and without it the effective targeting of survey work and conservation interventions would be impossible.

<sup>66</sup>Without the central collation of long term species distribution data that is so effectively delivered by the NBN it would be extremely difficult to measure changes in rarity of freshwater species or to identify former sites from which a given species has been lost

To expand upon my specific interests a little more, I am passionate about stemming the decline of rare freshwater macroinvertebrates, in particular the stonefly and mayfly fauna that are also cherished by our anglers and fly fishermen. It troubles me we are losing our native river fly fauna and that in years to come the rich diversity of our freshwaters risks becoming further impoverished. A tour through the Freshwater Biological Association Mayfly and Stonefly identification keys shows the beginning of this process of species loss. Several species in those works have not been recorded since the turn of the century and now seem long gone. More recently the distributions of additional species have contracted, and the threat of climate change adds a further insult to aquatic ecosystems already stressed from multiple pressures.



The Scare Yellow Sally, Isogenus nubecula (Plecoptera: Perlodidae). Photograph © John Davy-Bowker

One species in particular has had a heavy influence on me - the rare stonefly *lsogenus nubecula*, commonly known as the Scare Yellow Sally. After first becoming involved in survey work for this rare stonefly on the River Dee in North Wales in the 1990's it was troubling a short time afterwards to be unable to find this species anywhere in its former range along the Dee. As the only river supporting *Isogenus* in the UK, this meant that the species had been lost from the British list. Also rare in Europe, the species has been lost from most river systems and has the international status 'Critically Endangered'.

Fortunately the story does not end here. Having never quite given up hope, in conducting one of my periodic sampling visits to the River Dee this spring I was delighted to rediscover the Scare Yellow Sally still hanging. Less than ten nymphs were found, but all were well grown and appeared to be in good condition. Through captive rearing back in Dorset further knowledge was also gathered on nymph feeding and adult mating behaviour.

The National Biodiversity Network is central to this kind of work. NBN data highlights where species such as *Isogenus* are or used to be found and provides the vital knowledge base upon which rare species surveys are based. I'm very proud to not only represent my own organisation, the Freshwater Biological Association as a member of the NBN, but to also support the Network through my individual membership. I value the NBN greatly and I would urge other users of Network data to also consider joining the NBN as an individual member and contributing to supporting such an important cause.

### New ways of working together – adapting to change and seizing opportunities

### Written by Keiron Brown, Recording Officer, Earthworm Society of Britain

The National Earthworm Recording Scheme was launched by the Earthworm Society of Britain (ESB) in 2014 with the aim of collating and generating earthworm species records to improve our understanding of the ecology and population health of these important organisms.

Setting up a recording scheme presented many challenges, including deciding how we would share the data that we record as a national recording scheme. There is no denying that the biological recording sector comprises of a complex web of organisations. <sup>66</sup>As a new recording scheme, we decided that we should look for the simplest current data flow model that would ensure that our records would be easily accessible locally, nationally and globally.<sup>99</sup>

The 'endgame' for our recording scheme is to ensure earthworm records are shared widely and available for other data users so that the data collected by earthworm recorders (and research institutions) can be put to good use. Our fellow recording schemes all have their own methods or combination of methods for disseminating their data, so there was no 'standard' data flow model to follow. As a new recording scheme, we decided that we should look for the simplest current data flow model that would ensure that our records would be easily accessible locally, nationally and globally.

In order to achieve this, we set out our Open Data Agreement for Earthworm Records. This outlined our commitment to share the data we collate locally, nationally and globally, and to do so in a way that allows open access to our earthworm records with no constraints to the use of the data and ensuring records are available at the full resolution they are accepted at. This is all achieved through the use of the Creative Commons by Attribution licence.

Local Environmental Records Centres (LERCs) support recorders, including earthworm recorders, on a local level and are pivotal to the survival of the 'local biological recording community'. The ESB sends its entire database to all of the UK (and Jersey) LERCs each year, so that all of our earthworm records are also accessible through these local recording hubs.

Previously, we shared our data nationally through the NBN Gateway and will continue going forward through the new NBN Atlas. From here, our data is passed on to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, where it is accessible globally.

We look forward to working with the NBN Secretariat and other members of the Network to seize this opportunity to improve the way we, as a Network, collate our data through this new digital data-sharing platform. Opportunities that the ESB believes need to be prioritised include:

- providing a simplified platform for sharing our data with LERCs to increase the resilience of the Network
- the implementation of a standardised verification status system on the NBN Atlas to improve the transparency of data quality.
- the creation of a universal system for creating record keys (individual reference numbers for biological records) to avoid record duplication.

# Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC and the NBN

### Written by Mandy Rudd, Director, Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC

Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (GiGL) is the capital's environmental records centre. We offer a range of services, from curating data to providing insights that support evidence-based action, compliance, research and discovery in the city.

There are a lot of skillsets and standards required to meet our aim of providing easy access to high quality data services, and we believe that collaboration with and learning from experts outside of GiGL improves what we do and helps us to meet the expectations of our stakeholders. We work with external IT, communication, and business experts, and have a board of directors and an advisory panel that brings a different perspective to our work.



We are members of the Open Data Institute (ODI) in order to get to learn more about the opportunities open data present to us and our stakeholders, and having become a community interest company 4 years ago we have joined Social Enterprise UK to learn more about the social enterprise movement.

The membership organisations that we work most closely with however are the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC), and the National Biodiversity Network Trust (NBN). Our engagement with both is viewed as essential by all of the constituent parts of the GiGL Family as it is a clear demonstration of our commitment to implementing national standards at a local level, it raises our profile, and adds weight to our position as one of the main advocates of sharing and accessing high quality biodiversity data in Greater London.

Making the GiGL partnership's data holdings available via the NBN Gateway enabled us to collaborate with other LERCs in fulfilling contracts with members of the Network. The public-facing data met the needs of numerous students that were confident enough in asking questions of the data that they didn't require our support. This freed up our time to work with students locally who needed more input from us, whether it was teaching them how to gain insights into the data, or signposting them to our local and national expert contacts for further advice.

We have sought to contribute to the Trust's work as well as benefiting from it, and playing an active part in the Network has brought exciting opportunities for working with other Network members. The increased focus on putting the Network ahead of the NBN systems, along with a commitment to open data has meant that it has been especially important for LERCs to get involved. We've shared what we've learnt through our engagement with the ODI, brought our local experience to the captivating and engaging people working group, represented ALERC on the NBN Atlas Steering Group, contributed to all of the Trust's Board meetings, participated in the SBIF review and attended the annual conference in Edinburgh. It's been quite a year!

<sup>66</sup> The increased focus on putting the Network ahead of the NBN systems, along with a commitment to open data has meant that it has been especially important for LERCs to get involved.<sup>99</sup>

### Habitat Aid and the NBN

### Written by Nick Mann, Habitat Aid

I'm delighted that we have been able to support the NBN. It's typical of the organisations we love to help, facilitating important scientific work on a limited budget. We've always felt appreciated too, which helps! Ever since I first bumped into the Network at a Trade Show some years ago it seemed a really obvious and valuable charity to work with.

Our interest isn't entirely philanthropic. Our association has given us valuable direct exposure to some of our target customers, from whom we've learnt a lot too. Habitat Aid has also benefited indirectly. We try to promote good science and community projects as well as the environment, so publicising our involvement with the NBN is a great way to reinforce those brand elements.







2015-2020 - TOGETHER

# **STRATEGIC AIM 1** RECORD, COLLECT, DIVERSIFY, ENHANCE AND MOBILISE BIOLOGICAL DATA

The information in this, the main section of the Annual Report, shows the progress that has been made over the course of the year to realise the NBN Strategy 2015 – 2020. Here we highlight the main projects or activities that sit within each Strategic Aim.

# Making records, daily

Our Network of data partners who share their data through the NBN is diverse and powerful. Thousands of biodiversity records are created every day by professionals, volunteer groups, and expert amateur naturalists. The NBN Secretariat is proud to provide a platform whereby these records can be shared so that they can reach a wide audience and be re-used many times to help the records reach their full potential. The NBN Gateway provided a space where these records could be shared and discovered. The new NBN Atlas takes this further, allowing for critical interrogation of records, for increased learning about specific species, and for species records to be viewed in relation to other factors, such as habitats and climatic variations. As the functionality grows on the NBN Atlas, we hope that the commitment to sharing open data does, too.

# Increasing data, openly

The NBN Atlas does not have access controls, nor the The launch of the NBN Atlas has created a great functionality to create enhanced access to records opportunity for all of the NBN's members and data (other than for sensitive species). This deliberate move partners to revise the records that they share. There has was to encourage openness and increase availability been the opportunity to open up records by enabling and usability of records, across the UK and beyond. data partners to apply creative commons licences to We are pleased with the support we have received their datasets which will allow more openness than the for this change to data access and we look forward original terms and conditions of the NBN Gateway. This to helping all our data partners as we move further in turn gives data partners more control over how they forward towards open data. would like their records to be used, and how they would like to be recognised for their provision.

In the months leading up to the launch of the NBN Atlas, the NBN Secretariat worked to gain permission from the NBN Gateway data partners to transfer their datasets over to the NBN Atlas platform. A total of 701 datasets (71.8% of the 977 datasets publicly available on the NBN Gateway), containing 55.6 million records, were transferred, and further records were submitted directly to the NBN Secretariat for loading into the NBN Atlas. This meant that when ready for its launch, the NBN Atlas had over 215 million species records publicly available.

<sup>66</sup>The NBN Atlas does not have access controls, nor the functionality to create enhanced access to records (other than for sensitive species). This deliberate move was to encourage openness and increase availability and usability of records, across the UK and beyond.<sup>99</sup>

### Data holding certificates

In November 2016, data holding certificates were sent out to all NBN Gateway data partners to summarise their NBN Gateway data holdings as of 31st March 2016. This followed on from the success of the data holding certificates, which were first issued in 2015. These documents summarise information such as number of datasets and records on the NBN Gateway, the percentage of records available at public visibility, the percentage of records available at various resolutions, enhanced access request response time, and, a new addition for 2016's certificates, was a breakdown of the data licences that had been applied to datasets.

This year we also gave our data partners the option to make these certificates public on the NBN website, to show their contribution to the Network and to highlight areas where data could be opened up and data flows improved. This also helps data contributors see how available their records are, when managed through an organisation or scheme.

The NBN Trust will continue to run this annual initiative with data holdings from the NBN Atlas.



### Data quality and verification

Discussions around data quality and verification are ongoing across the Network, with a working group seeking to move things forward in 2017. Amongst other things, this Group will look at the verification process for records submitted to the NBN Atlas, which is in itself a complex task.

As things stand, datasets that are made available through the NBN Atlas, and that contain verified records, are clearly flagged as a 'Verified dataset' on the respective dataset's metadata page. This enables users of the data to make their own decision about what data to include in their analysis. A section on the dataset metadata page, under the heading 'Data Quality', also allows the dataset administrator to give details about the quality of the data in the dataset.

## The Consultants Portal

The Consultants Portal (www.consultantsportal.uk) has had over 34,000 records submitted to it, from environmental consultants and ecologists across the country. In 2016 - 17 development on the Consultants Portal was paused to allow the full attention of the NBN Secretariat to be focused on the building and launch of the NBN Atlas. This pause on development is still in force, but the portal is still open and available to receive records. We anticipate that development will resume on the Consultants Portal in late 2017.







# **STRATEGIC AIM 2** MAKE BIOLOGICAL DATA AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE

# Moving from the NBN Gateway to the NBN Atlas

As mentioned throughout this Report, the launch of the NBN Atlas on 1st April 2017, was significant for everyone involved in the NBN. A major part of the transition from the NBN Gateway to the NBN Atlas was to ensure that all members and data partners were kept up to date with developments throughout 2016 - 17. Details about new data formats, changes to API's and access control discussions were publicised to help prepare all NBN data partners for the move to the NBN Atlas. All data partners who administered datasets on the NBN Gateway were contacted with a Data Partner Agreement, requesting permission to transfer their datasets over to the NBN Atlas. This process took many months in terms of receipt of the agreements and administering them by the NBN Secretariat. However, this was an important part of the process as the data partner agreement outlined details of the terms and conditions of the NBN Atlas and requested creative commons data licences for all datasets for transfer.





### New licences

The NBN Trust took the decision to implement creative commons licensing for all species records to be held by the NBN Atlas, and data partners also had the opportunity to apply these licences to the records that were held on the NBN Gateway, prior to their transfer. Creative commons licences are machine readable and are recognised globally. By applying data licences to records, the data partner has control over how their records can be re-used and is able to make records more 'open' than the predefined terms and conditions of the NBN Gateway allowed. It is also much easier to share records further, for example, with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), which has also recently implemented creative commons licensing for all of the records that they share.

The <u>licences</u> that are available via the NBN are: CC0, CC BY, CC BY-NC and OGL. The OGL licence is an Open Government Licence intended for use by Government Agencies within the UK. This licence is comparable to the CC BY licence, and can be interchanged as such when records are to be shared via GBIF.

At the time of writing, the following licences have been applied to datasets on the NBN Atlas:

- CC-BY-NC (322)
- CC-BY (212)
- OGL (184)
- CCO (13)

# NBN Gateway – the final data count

As we say goodbye to the NBN Gateway, we wanted to bring you the annual round up of usage statistics in 2016 - 17:

- 954 million records were downloaded from the NBN Gateway
- 5449 users logged in to the NBN Gateway
- 487 datasets were uploaded to the NBN Gateway
- 133 million species records were available on the NBN Gateway

These figures had continued to grow year on year. With the launch of the NBN Atlas and its powerful analysis functionality and engaging interface, we hope to see these figures continue to rise as we monitor use and downloads so that we can make accurate comparisons year on year.

It is possible to view usage statistics on the NBN Atlas for any dataset on its dataset page. You can see what categories the downloads for each dataset fall into, broken down by 'this month', 'last 3 months', 'last 12 months' and 'All downloads'. The availability of download statistics will continue to be developed for data partners throughout 2017.



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## Forerunner to NBN Atlas is shortlisted for Nature of Scotland Awards

In June 2016, the NBN Secretariat entered the Atlas of Living Scotland for the RSPB's Nature of Scotland Awards 2016 in the 'Innovation Award' category. We were delighted to discover in September that this was one of six projects shortlisted as finalists. At the Awards' ceremony in November, the Atlas of Living Scotland sadly didn't win, but we were pleased to congratulate the James Hutton Institute for their project "Magic Margins", which did!





# **STRATEGIC AIM 3** CAPTIVATE AND ENGAGE PEOPLE ABOUT WILDLIFE

### Keeping in touch

One of the NBN Secretariat's main communications channels is the monthly issue of Network News. Previously called NBN eNews, we gave it a re-vamp in May 2016, so that its look and feel was more closely aligned to that of the new NBN website, which had launched in March 2016. The simple format gives readers a brief introduction to each story with links to the NBN website for the full information. It also highlights forthcoming events and has quick links to some of the main areas of NBN work.

We welcome articles and news updates from our members and data partners, as this aims to be very much a Network newsletter, rather than just about news from the NBN Secretariat.

At the end of March 2017, over 2,100 people were registered to receive this monthly update.



# Moving the Strategic Aim forward through the working group

When the NBN Action Plan was launched in April 2016, one of the means of moving activity forward was through the creation of working groups to focus on each of the Strategic Aims. The working group for Captivating and Engaging people has made a good start in this respect and has held two meetings and a workshop at the NBN Conference.

At the latest meeting, in February 2017, the group discussed potential priorities for the Network in this area of business:

- Raise the profile of recording
- Have a recording system that we can promote, and which has a consistent voice
- Need the NBN Atlas to engage recorders and deliver what they want
- Engage the interested (students, NSS those on their way to be recorders)
- Engage local government e.g. local State of Nature reports
- Engage the education sector and get biological recording onto the National Curriculum
- Have the right tools and show how to use them
- Encourage recording as life-long learning for old and young

We look forward to agreeing on the options for taking the priorities forward in due course, which will undoubtedly involve many more colleagues from across the Network.





# NBN Atlas – reaching new audiences

The NBN Atlas will allow the Network to reach out to many more users. We know that there were many loyal users of the NBN Gateway who want to see the NBN Atlas provide the same and increased functionality, but we also believe that the NBN Atlas will reach out to a wider audience while still fulfilling its vital role for the biological recording community.

To sustain the NBN Atlas and the millions of species records we need to open out the appeal of biological data to the wider public. Tools like 'Explore your area' will allow people to take more interest in what is around them.

The future developments of allowing citizen scientists to engage with their local area and then with the recording community should offer benefits to all with increases in data and more engagement with schemes and societies.



# Increasing media and social media engagement

Media and social media continue to play a key role in implementing NBN's aim to captivate and engage people about wildlife.

For example, we again achieved positive media coverage for the winners of the second UK Awards for Biological Recording and Information Sharing in publications including BBC Wildlife magazine, New Nature magazine, the Mablethorpe Leader and BSBI news as well as a BBC Channel Island News radio interview with one of the youth winners, George Garnett. In addition, the Awards received coverage on the websites of organisations such as CIEEM, Field Studies Council, Essex Wildlife Trust, Essex Wildlife Trust Biological Records Centre, Caledonian Conservation Ltd and Discover Wildlife (BBC Wildlife Magazine's website).

NBN's social media following has increased significantly. Between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017 the number of NBN Facebook 'likes' increased by 32% from 739 to 975 and the reach of a typical Facebook post has increased by 146% from an average of 288 people in April 2016 to an average of 708 people in March 2017.

NBN's Twitter followers have increased by 22% from 3493 at the beginning of April 2016 to 4267 at the end of March 2017. While the number of other people's Tweets mentioning the NBN has risen by almost 14% from around 80+ mentions per month last year to an average of 90+ mentions per month during this year – there was a peak during November 2016 (the month of the NBN annual conference and award ceremony) with 346 other people's Tweets mentioning the NBN. The number of Twitter followers visiting the NBN's profile page has remained at around 1000 visits per month – no growth on last year, but the number of NBN's Tweets being seen by others (Tweet Impressions) has increased by 55% from 38.7K to 60.17K.



## UK Awards for Biological Recording and Information Sharing

Now in their second year, these awards were developed to celebrate the tremendous contribution that biological recorders make in observing and documenting our natural world. Developed in partnership with the National Forum for Biological Recording and the Biological Records Centre, in 2016 the Awards were generously sponsored by Swarovski Optik UK, Paramo Directional Clothing and Field Studies Council.

For 2016, we added a further category of award, to include one for groups, making a total of five. The list below shows the number of nominations received for each category from a total of 53:

- David Robertson adult award for recording marine and coastal wildlife (7)
- David Robertson youth award for recording marine and coastal wildlife (1)
- Gilbert White adult award for recording terrestrial and freshwater wildlife (26)
- Gilbert White youth award for recording terrestrial and freshwater wildlife (2)
- Lynne Farrell Group Award (17)



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The 2016 winners were presented with their Awards on the evening of the NBN Conference on 17th November at the National Museums Scotland in Edinburgh:

- Chris Wood winner of the David Robertson adult award
- Jordan Havell winner of the David Robertson youth award
- Richard Comont winner of the Gilbert White adult award
- George Garnett winner of the Gilbert White youth award
- Essex Wildlife Trusts River Wardens Lynne Farrell Group Award

Due to the high calibre of one of the nominees for the Gilbert White adult award, we also agreed to have a one-off Highly Commended Award, which went to Mark Pritchard.

In addition to the publicly nominated awards, we also presented the John Sawyer NBN Open Data Award to Caledonian Conservation Limited to celebrate their commitment to open data.

The UK Award winners with the Earl of Selborne, Michael Hassell and Lynne Farrell



## Citizen, Scientists, Spiders and other Species – a panel discussion in the House of Lords

In October 2016, the NBN arranged a panel discussion at the House of Lords as part of a unique event -Nottingham in Parliament Day. As the NBN Secretariat's offices are based in Nottingham we wanted to be part of the event and have an opportunity to present the excellent work of the Network in Parliament.

The session was chaired by Barry Gardiner MP, former chair of the APPG for Biodiversity and Lord Hunt of Chesterton.

On the panel with Jo Judge were David Askew, Director of Evidence at Natural England and Dr Sara Goodacre, Associate Professor at the University of Nottingham who manages their Spider Lab and represented <u>Open Air Laboratories</u> (OPAL).

The informal style of the session allowed attendees from a wide range of organisations including Defra, OPAL, the Natural History Museum and a number of interested parties and parliamentarians to discuss freely the challenges affecting collection of biodiversity data and engaging 'citizen scientists'.

There was consensus among those who attended that the Network and other partners need to work together to create stories from that data. It was agreed that as conservationists we believe that protecting nature is right, but we have difficulty communicating with those that may not hold that view or think that green development is a barrier to progress. We need to answer the question 'How can we engage the public to value something that they do not see?'

<sup>66</sup> There was consensus among those who attended that the Network and other partners need to work together to create stories from that data.<sup>99</sup>

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OPAL will be working with community groups across the UK to develop those connections and there will be an opportunity for partnership work to ensure data they collect flows into the NBN Atlas.

Before the panel discussion, staff from the NBN, the Natural History Museums' ID trainers and other volunteers took part in a 'nature survey' in Victoria Tower Gardens, located next to the Palace of Westminster. Within an hour they had managed to record over 60 different species – this was higher than expected for this urban, highly managed park. Its purpose was to raise awareness to politicians of the biodiversity that can be found literally on their doorstep.

## Promoting biological recording in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh

An opportunity arose for the NBN to develop a display for the John Hope Gateway, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's biodiversity and information centre.

Presented with this wonderful opportunity, we knew that we wanted to inform and educate the general public about the importance of biodiversity data, why we need to record and how the information is used by many different organisations for conservation purposes. The display therefore raises awareness of biological recording, highlighting the wide-ranging organisations involved and why it is important. It also highlights the <u>NBN Atlas</u> and incorporates a 2 minute slideshow which shares key statistics and messages, as well as briefly showing how to use the NBN Atlas.

The display was installed at the beginning of March 2016 and will be in place for a year.



# **STRATEGIC AIM 4** PROVIDE THE BEST BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The decision to move from the NBN Gateway to the NBN Atlas was taken for a number of reasons, but one of the main factors was to allow us to achieve this Strategic Aim.

We have talked about the programme of work to deliver this huge change throughout this Report, so here focus on the pilot version of the NBN Atlas, the Atlas of Living Scotland, and the changes we've needed to make to some of the information which underpins the NBN Atlas infrastructure.

# The Atlas of Living Scotland

The Atlas of Living Scotland, the pilot project for the NBN Atlas, was formally launched on the 27th May 2016 at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. This was attended by a 40-plus invited audience who were given a series of presentations about the development of the Atlas of Living Scotland as well as demonstrations of its capabilities. Users of the Atlas were encouraged to explore its capabilities and then to send us their comments about its content and functionality and to make suggestions for improvements. These comments and suggestions contributed to guiding our decisions on improving the Atlas of Living Scotland, which went on to form the basis of the NBN Atlas and the NBN Atlas Scotland.

## Not just species data

Apart from species data, the NBN Atlas supports spatial data layers, such as boundary, habitat and other environmental layers. Unlike the species datasets, the spatial layers that were available through the NBN Gateway could not be transferred for technical reasons, so we have been re-sourcing the required layers from data suppliers. This is an ongoing process, and this year we have prioritised the sourcing of boundary layers (such as protected areas) and habitat layers.

## Sensitive species on the NBN Atlas

Data providers no longer have to make their own assessments on the sensitivity of their records, as a <u>Sensitive Species List</u> has been agreed by the UK's statutory bodies and relevant experts following a criteria based approach. This list shows those species that are deemed sensitive and the maximum resolution at which these records should be displayed. The list also allows for variations in sensitivity between the member countries of the UK, e.g. a species can be listed as sensitive in Wales, but not in Scotland.

Records for species on the list can be submitted to the NBN Atlas at capture resolution as when they are uploaded to the NBN Atlas they are automatically blurred to the agreed resolution for public viewing. These blurred records are available for use under the conditions of a <u>Creative Commons licence</u> as determined by the data provider.

If access is subsequently granted to high resolution, they are available for use under a restricted licence, which is issued by the relevant data partner.

Work will take place in 2017 to agree how the sensitive species lists are managed in the long term.



# Historic data supply to the NBN Atlas

As part of the changeover from the NBN Gateway to the NBN Atlas, we had to look at the guidance for transfer, or direct submission, of historic data and data supplied by uncontactable data recorders to the NBN Atlas.

Individual data recorders have Intellectual Property Rights over the data they collect. This is important as, in many cases, the NBN Data Partner (i.e. the person or organisation which provides data to the NBN Atlas) is not the person who collected the data. This meant that the original recorder's permission may have been required before the data partner could transfer data from the NBN Gateway, or submit data directly, to the NBN Atlas.

The regulations governing the rights of data owners are complex and so the NBN Secretariat sought legal advice to clarify this matter, the outcomes of which can be found on the <u>NBN Atlas</u>.

# Guidance on the definition of noncommercial use

One of the licences available for use on the NBN Atlas is the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial or CC-BY-NC licence. Data users can only use data supplied under a CC-BY-NC licence for non-commercial purposes.

Creative Commons define commercial use as "one primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation". Whether a use is commercial will depend on the specifics of the situation and the intentions of the user.

In order to assist the NBN data providers and users, the NBN Secretariat set out additional guidance on what may be considered to be non-commercial and commercial use of biodiversity data, which links to Principle 7 of the NBN Data Exchange Principles.

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This Principle, set out below, has three parts as it applies to those who supply records, those who use records and those who manage them:

- a) Managers and funders of biodiversity data should make basic fact freely available (except for handling charges if needed) for not-for-profit decision-making, education, research and other public-benefit purposes
- b) Biodiversity data suppliers should try to arrange resourcing of information provision so that charges for not-for-profit uses are minimal and charges for commercial uses are realistic, but do not prevent the use of biodiversity data.
- c) Biodiversity data users should expect to contribute to sustaining the provision of biodiversity data through contributing either in kind or financially to the collection, collation and management of biodiversity data, or at the point of use.

We would encourage all potential users of biodiversity data to consider the costs of data collection, collation and management incurred by NBN Data Partners and to include these costs in bids for funding and tenders for commercial work.

We would also stress that if you are at all unsure whether your proposed use of the data could be deemed commercial, to contact the data provider directly.

More information on the guidance surrounding commercial and non-commercial use can be found on the <u>NBN Atlas</u>.





# **STRATEGIC AIM 5** SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE **NBN, ITS BOARD AND ITS MEMBERS**

## Sponsorship and Funding

During 2016 - 17 the NBN was delighted to receive sponsorship from a number of organisations.

We were especially grateful to Swarovski Optik UK who for the past two years sponsored the UK Awards for Biological Recording and Information Sharing. We are also very pleased to thank our additional sponsors in 2016 – 17, Paramo Directional Clothing and The Field Studies Council, who provided prizes for the Award winners.

Habitat Aid has continually offered its support to the NBN Conference and its donation assists us to keep delegate fees down. This year we also received sponsorship and support from National Museums Scotland with our fantastic Conference venue and SSE whose support allowed a number of students to attend.

Receiving sponsorship towards the NBN Conference is vital to ensure that we can keep delegate fees as low as possible. Our aim is to cover the costs and make the Conference affordable to as many people as possible. We will continue to work hard to attract sponsors and ask our Network to help and assist in accessing support.



During the year we received funding from a number of government agencies to assist with development and hosting of the NBN Atlas. These funds ensured that the NBN Atlas was ready to launch when the NBN Gateway closed at the end of March 2017.

The government agencies have committed to continue funding to cover hosting and some development costs of the NBN Atlas. Other services such as supporting users, responding to queries, development of help guides and general promotion is being undertaken by the NBN Secretariat. The support of our membership is vital and we will be endeavouring to encourage NBN Atlas users to join the NBN to support the ongoing development of the NBN Atlas and the biological recording community.

The current funding bodies are Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and Natural England.

# NBN Atlas Funding

### Membership Review

### Results of the NBN Membership Review

During 2016 we undertook a review of the NBN Membership scheme. Full details of the outcome of the review, completed in early 2017, are available on the NBN website. The NBN Trust and the Board of Trustees would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the membership review. All these comments have informed the decision made by the Board of Trustees on how to proceed.

#### In summary

Overall the feedback received was that the current membership scheme was not working, however, there was no clear consensus on a proposed new scheme. The clear messages that came out of the responses were that organisational members were not able to, or prepared to, pay any more in membership fees at this time; that the proposed individual membership category was not appropriate and clarity was still required on the benefits of membership.

The Trustees agreed to introduce simplified membership categories, hold fees at the existing rate for current members and introduce a 'Pay What You Decide' membership for individuals.

For simplicity there are now two types of Membership – 'Member' and 'Corporate Member'.

Members can join as either an Individual or Organisational. Organisational members include all organisations, record centres, schemes and societies, voluntary groups, government bodies etc. Corporate Membership is for businesses or other organisations who want to support the aims of the Network and for whom 'Membership' may not be appropriate. This type of membership does not have access to the full suite of benefits such as voting rights. Fees have been kept at the current rates for existing members for 2017 - 18. New members are being asked to join at tiered rates relating to turnover. These are similar to the current rates. Full details of the new scheme, updated benefits table, and terms and conditions are available on the <u>NBN website</u>.

### Looking Forward

It is anticipated that the pay what you decide approach will generate new memberships and we will be seeking to introduce the ability to pay by direct debit, online gift aid donations and increase benefits such as member only pages on the NBN website. We will also be developing the Corporate Membership scheme further.

### NBN Conference

After the successful new format of running a two day event in 2015, the Conference in 2016 followed suit and was held on 17th and 18th November at the National Museums Scotland in Edinburgh.

Around 170 – 180 delegates attended across the two days and listened to 24 different presentations and attended one of four workshops on the afternoon of 17th. The annual Sir John Burnett memorial lecture was given by Charles Godfray CBE FRS.

86.9% of delegates who completed the Conference survey prefer a two day event and so this format will continue for the foreseeable future. We also gauged the willingness of delegates to move around the country. This was also very positive with 78.7% saying they would travel to Wales. The 2017 Conference is being held in Cardiff as a result of this feedback, which links very well with the launch of the NBN Atlas Wales this April.

### Honorary Member 2016

As has become our tradition, we were delighted to bestow this year's Honorary Membership award during the NBN Conference. The worthy recipient in 2016 was Steve Wilkinson, who many of you will know as the driving force behind the NBN Gateway for many years.

Without his vision and management, the NBN Gateway would never have happened let alone been the success that it became. Steve ensured that the teams involved shared a common vision, he secured the staff and funding needed to drive forward development and challenged the accepted standards on data use, quality and sharing. In addition to his technical input to the NBN, Steve has made a significant contribution to record generation and volunteer engagement through his work with the Conchological Society.



## Collaborative working in Scotland

In April 2016, the Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum (SBIF) became fully aligned with the NBN in order to support the work of the NBN in Scotland. The SBIF Advisory Group provides guidance and support to the NBN's Scottish Liaison Officer, and together they are working to facilitate the NBN data flow pathway in Scotland. In July 2016, the SBIF Advisory Group commenced a review of the biological recording infrastructure in Scotland, in order to enable the infrastructure to become more sustainable and successful in operating the NBN data flow pathway. At the end of March 2017 the review was nearing the end of the information gathering phase, and analysis of interviews and questionnaire results had just begun. It is expected that the review will have published its recommendations by the end of 2017 - 18. Progress with the review can be followed in monthly highlight reports that are published in the Scotland pages on the NBN website, along with all final papers and other relevant documents.

<sup>44</sup>In July 2016, the SBIF Advisory Group commenced a review of the biological recording infrastructure in Scotland, in order to enable the infrastructure to become more sustainable and successful in operating the NBN data flow pathway.<sup>99</sup>

# WORKING TOGETHER AND SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

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# THE YEAR AHEAD

The next financial year, 2017 – 2018, is going to be another exciting one for the Network. We will be moving the development of the NBN Atlas further forward, with much of the work based on user feedback and requirements. To help with this major work area, we will have a Systems Developer in place to work on the technical aspects of the NBN Atlas and a Technical & Data Partner Support Officer, who will be liaising with the NBN's Data Partners and users to help them understand how to prepare and contribute their information to, and how to use the data on, the NBN Atlas.

While the majority of further functionality will be informed by the stakeholder workshops, some of the main developments we foresee for the NBN Atlas in 2017-18 are the implementation of enhanced access to sensitive species data, addition of verification status to individual records and increasing the level of customisation for users.

We will also be carrying on work to launch the NBN Atlas Isle of Man, with the aim of launching this portal by the 31st March 2018.

In addition to the NBN Atlas activities, we hope that the Working Groups will continue their initial work and take forward our objectives from the NBN Action Plan. There was a buzz around the workshops at the NBN Conference, which linked back to the Working Groups and we now need to see agreed priorities taken forward. The NBN Secretariat is a small team and cannot fulfil all of the Network's aims on its own. To truly be a partnership that will benefit us all, we must commit to spreading the work that is necessary to achieve our strategic aims and objectives. A collaborative approach is the only way we will make this succeed.

We are also reviewing and re-developing our Communications Strategy and Plan, which will be part of a broader Marketing Strategy. The Marketing Strategy will include our plans for communications, PR, digital marketing, fundraising and membership. We plan to share this with the Network, to allow for greater support of our communications activities and also to allow organisations to use the strategies as a template for their own work where it is helpful for them to do so.

We need to ensure a more stable funding base and within the Marketing Strategy we will be putting a greater focus on sponsorship and fundraising. Once again, this is where our Network members and data partners can help us. Are there relationships you have with organisations that would also be relevant to link with the NBN? Are there names and contacts you can pass on to us? Half the battle is finding the right person to talk to in large organisations, but if we already have a link to them, through you, it could really help us to develop our own relationships. Likewise, many of you are in the fortunate position to have wildlife celebrities as patrons, presidents or regular contacts. If there are opportunities to talk about the NBN and the NBN Atlas to them, then please do so. We are slowly becoming known in these circles, but your assistance to get the endorsement of those who could promote the NBN on a large scale, would be a significant help.

Finally, in looking forward to the year ahead, we urge you to keep talking to us. Your feedback on the NBN Atlas has made it what it is to date and will continue to develop it over the coming years. We will have stakeholder workshops and sensitive species workshops in the latter part of 2017, which will be an ideal opportunity for you to input to the process. We want the NBN Atlas to be a system which is well used, well liked and highly regarded. By continuing to work together on this, that should be easily achieved.

The same can be said for how we are working as a Network. We have highlighted the fact that the NBN Secretariat is a small team and we can't do everything we would like to, but we always do our best to provide the help or resources you need. However, if there is anything more we could do to provide the support you need then please just let us know as we are always keen to receive constructive feedback.



Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account) for the year to 31 March 2017.

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual directors' report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 March 2017 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies House.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP2015) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.



To note: there has been a change in the format of the accounts and how these are presented due to a change in accounting standards from SORP 2005 to SORP FRSSE.

Total actual income received (less donated services)	Total actual expenditure (less donated services)	Balance
363,772	393,828	(30,056)

			2017 (£)	2016 (£)
(1)	210,748	135,620	346,368	327,325
(2)	568	0	568	150
(3)	442,317	0	442,317	421,133
	653,633	135,620	789,253	748,608
Expenditure				
	(2)	<ul><li>(2) 568</li><li>(3) 442,317</li></ul>	(2)     568     0       (3)     442,317     0	(2)5680568(3)442,3170442,317

Costs of raising donations and legacies		(304)	0	(304)	(3,762)
Expenditure on charitable activities	(4)	(687,316)	(131,689)	(819,005)	(717,302)
Total expenditure		(687,620)	(131,689)	(819,309)	(721,064)

NET Income /(Expenditure) for the year	(33,987)	3,931	(30,056)	27,544
Total funds brought forward	129,571	50,000	179,571	152,027

Total funds carried forward	95,584	53,931	149,515	179,571
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	Notes	Total Funds 2017 (£)	Total Funds 2016 (£)
Fixed Assets:			
Tangible Assets	(7)	890	1,470
Investments		2	0
Current Assets:			·
Debtors and prepayments	(8)	6,862	43,813
Cash at bank and in hand		220,417	173,516
Total		227,279	217,329
Creditors:			·
Amounts falling due within one year	(9)	(78,656)	(39,227)
Net Current Asse	ts	148,623	178,102
Total Assets less Liabilities	Current	149,515	179,572
Net Assets		149,515	179,572
Funds:			
Restricted income	e funds	53,931	50,000
Unrestricted inco	me funds	95,584	129,572
Total funds		149,515	179,572

# NOTES

### 1. Donations

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Total funds 2017 (£)	Total funds 2016 (£)
Other	163	0	163	308
Grants receivable				
NBN Atlas Scotland	0	25,640	25,640	60,000
NBN Atlas Wales	0	0	0	50,000
NBN Atlas Isle of Man	0	17,000	17,000	0
NBN Atlas England	0	69,000	69,000	0
NBN Atlas Sweden	0	2,700	2,700	0
SBIF Post	0	16,280	16,280	0
NHM ID Trainers	0	5,000	5,000	0
Subscriptions	210,585	0	210,585	217,017
Totals	210,748	135,620	346,368	327,325

### 2. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Total funds 2017 (£)	Total funds 2016 (£)
Bank interest receivable	568	568	150

### 3. Other incoming resources

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Total funds 2017 (£)	Total funds 2016 (£)
Miscellaneous income	16,836	16,836	14,567
Donated services and facilities	425,481	425,481	406,566
Total	442,317	442,317	421,133

### 4. Cost of charitable activities by fund type

	Donated services and facilities (£)	Project staff costs (£)	NBN Atlas (£)	Support costs (£) (Note 5)	Website development & promotion (£)	Total Funds 2017 (£)	Total Funds 2016 (£)
Cost of activities in furtherance of charity's objectives	425,481	127,419	107,709	155,592	2,804	819,005	717,302

### 5. Analysis of support costs

	Support	Governance costs	Total Costs 2017	Total Costs 2016
Staff Costs	84,562	0	84,562	82,393
Premises	9,620	0	9,620	9,637
Communications and IT	9,893	0	9,893	7,303
Legal and professional	4,760	0	4,760	1,553
Finance costs	936	0	936	590
Depreciation	2,360	0	2,360	3,908
Insurance	1,269	0	1,269	1,236
Printing, postage and stationery	6,892	0	6,892	6,016
Meeting and conference expenses	18,818	0	18,818	18,978
Travelling expenses	10,245	0	10,245	9,618
Bad debts	0	0	0	1,157
Accountancy	0	2,442	1,392	2,039
Auditors remuneration	0	1,050	2,100	2,700
Trustees expenses	0	1,989	1,989	2,157
Board meeting expenses	0	756	756	204
Total	149,355	6,237	155,592	148,332

### **Donated Services and Facilities**

The Trust received donated services and facilities, mainly in the form of staff resources and associated costs expended on NBN projects and contributing to Trust objectives. The member organisations provide services costed by themselves, using criteria provided by Trustees. The submitted figures are as follows.

The Network relies on the volunteer recorders who collect and share their data and thanks are given to them for their time and contribution towards the Network. We also heavily rely on our volunteer Trustees (relates to Andrew Wood and Chairman Michael Hassell who are not employed by an agency and therefore not paid) but who contribute significantly towards the Trust.

	Total Funds 2017 (£)	Total Funds 2016 (£)
Scottish Natural Heritage	81,978	38,500
Joint Nature Conservation Committee	31,179	91,042
British Trust for Ornithology	11,000	9,838
Natural History Museum	46,726	46,726
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology	126,780	153,468
Natural England	39,326	27,475
Natural Resources Wales	6,500	24,500
British Ecological Society	0	2,400
Environment Agency	4,000	6,496
National Forum for Biological Recording	0	6,120
ALERC	500	0
GiGL	8,500	0
John Bratton Volunteer Recorder	360	0
Field Studies Council	20,013	0
Kew Gardens	232	0
Northants BRC	315	0
West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre	970	0
Alan Stewart Trustee	1,700	0
Wildlife Trust Wales	478	0
SEPA	1,045	0
RSPB	42,395	0
SEWBReC	1,484	0
Totals	425,481	406,566

### 6. Staff costs and emoluments

	Total funds 2017 (£)	Total funds 2016 (£)
Wages and salaries	181,486	131,338
Social security costs	13,150	9,621
Other pension costs	16,320	6,428
Total	210,956	147,387

The company pays pension contributions on behalf of its employees and seconded staff. These contributions are included within staff costs.

### Particulars of employees:

The average number of employes during the year, calculated on the basis of full-time equivalents were as follows:

	2017	2016
Number of research staff – employed	0	1
Number of administration staff	6	4
Number of management staff – seconded / employed	2	1

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No employee received remuneration of more than £60,000 during the year (2016-2017)

### 7. Tangible fixed assets

Cost		
	Equipment (£)	
Brought forward 1.4.16	10,984	
Additions	1,780	
Total at 31.3.17	12,764	

Depreciation		
	Equipment (£)	
Brought forward 1.4.16	9,514	
Charge in the year	2,360	
Total at 31.3.17	11,874	

Net book value		
	Equipment (£)	
At 31 March 2017	890	
At 31 March 2016	1,470	

#### 8. Debtors

	2017	2016
Trade debtors	4,565	40,230
Prepayments	2,297	3,583
Total	6,862	43,813

#### 9. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2017	2016
Trade creditors	2,458	2,430
Taxation and social security	2,901	3,019
Accruals	72,003	32,858
Other creditors	1,294	920
Total	78,656	39,227

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable United Kingdom accounting standards and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (SORP2015)

Each year, for the purposes of the accounts, every support organisation produces a schedule of costs incurred in carrying out these services. These services are costed by the support organisation on the basis of an equitable sharing of its costs, or, where such figures are not readily available, at standard charge-out rates. These figures are shown as intangible income under "Donated services and facilities". We received intangible income, mainly in the form of staff resources and associated costs expended on NBN projects.

#### **Reserves Policy**

The Board of Trustees, through its Finance and Management Committee (FMC), has established a policy whereby a 'free reserve' of £56,000 plus staff redundancy costs is maintained. At this level, the FMC of the National Biodiversity Network Trust considers that it would be able to continue the current activities of the charity should there be a significant drop in funding or loss of in kind contributions for three months.

### **Risk Register**

The FMC has reviewed the major risks to the charity, and has systems designed to manage them. The main internal financial risks are minimised through procedures for delegation and appropriate authorisation of all transactions and projects and by ensuring consistent quality for all the charity's operations. The FMC reviews the risks at every meeting. Risks related to external funding agreements have their own risk management policy.



### **BIOD SERVICES LTD**

BioD Services Ltd was set up to help the Trust develop the Network through contractual work and was incorporated as a company limited by shares on 13 March, 2001.

The Articles of Association allow the company to transfer profits or income to the NBN Trust as gift aid. For 2016-2017 there were no profits from BioD Services to be donated over to the NBN Trust as gift aid.

The financial information below shows the total income against expenditure.

More detailed financial statements are available for either the NBN Trust accounts or BioD Services Ltd. Please contact the NBN Trust's Finance and Business Officer on 0115 924 7132 for your copy.

#### **Balance Sheet**

	Total Funds 2017 (£)	Total Funds 2016 (£)			
Fixed Assets:					
Tangible Assets	0	0			
Current Assets:		· · · ·			
Stocks	0	0			
Debtors and prepayments	809	17			
Cash at bank and in hand	13,016	14,448			
Total	13,825	14,465			
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	(449)	(548)			
Net Current Assets	13,376	13,917			
Capital and reserves					
Called up share capital	2	2			
Profit and loss reserves	13,374	13,915			
Total equity	13,376	13,917			
Detailed Trading and Prof	fit and Loss Account for the year e	ended 31 March 2017			
Opening and Closing Stock					
	2017	2016			
Opening Stock	0	3,000			
Closing Stock	0	3,000			

Details	2017	2016
Sale of Map Tile CD's	0	0

Note: The company no longer sells the Ordnance Survey map tiles and these have been written off from the accounts.

### Less Project Costs:

DEFRA project costs	0	0
Total	0	0

Note: The company currently does not have a DEFRA contract running and therefore there are no project costs to be reported at present.

#### Other Income:

Other Income.		
Bank Interest	5	6
Less Overheads:		
Telecommunications	0	643
Travel and subsistence	2	0
Accountancy	400	500
Legal and professional	0	26
Bank charges	144	183
Depreciation	0	118
Total	546	1,470
Deficit for the year	541	4,464



# ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The National Biodiversity Network Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 3rd April 2000 and registered as a charity on 25th August 2000.

The company was set up under a Memorandum of Association, which established the objectives and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

Under those articles, one third of the members of the Board of Trustees must retire at the AGM and may be re-appointed. The Board of Trustees is currently made up of fourteen people nominated from member organisations. They meet three times a year and their AGM has been moved to November when it will be held as part of the NBN Conference. No Trustee may serve more than ten years in office in total without the approval of the members given by ordinary resolution.

#### **Directors / Trustees**

### For the year ended 31st March 2017

Professor Michael Hassell CBE FRS Chairman

Mr Andrew Wood Treasurer

Ms J Ashworth

Mr J D Bowker

Dr Andrew Clements

Mr Mark Diamond

Mr Roddy Fairley

Mr Tim Hill

### Appointed 01.07.2016

Mr Ian Owens

Richard Pywell

Mr Paul Rose

Mr Alan Stewart
Appointed 01.07.2016

Mr T Webb

.....

Ms H Wilkinson

### **Other Information**

Dr Jo Judge Chief Executive Appointed 23.05.2016

Dr Jo Judge Secretary Appointed 23.05.2016

### **Registered office:**

NBN Trust Broadway Business Centre 32a Stoney Street Lace Market Nottingham NG1 1LL

### Accountants:

Rogers Spencer Chartered Certified Accountants Newstead House Pelham Road Nottingham NG5 1AP

### Solicitors:

DLA Piper 1 St Pauls Place Sheffield S1 2 JX

Freeths Cumberland Court 80 Mount Street Nottingham NG1 6HH

### Acknowledgements:

The NBN Secretariat would like to thank the following people for their contribution to this Annual Report:

Keiron Brown John Davy-Bowker Nick Mann Mandy Rudd

To truly be a partnership that will benefit us all, we must commit to spreading the work that is necessary to achieve our strategic aims and objectives.

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